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How to submit a book for *State of the Arts*

To submit a book by a Montana author for inclusion in *State of the Arts*’ “About Books” section:

Please send a copy of the book to *Lively Times*, 33651 Eagle Pass Trl., Charlo, MT 59824; or submit the following information electronically to writeus@livelytimes.com or mac@mt.gov:

- Title, author, publisher, publisher’s address and month/year published;
- Price and whether it’s hard- or softcover;
- A brief description of the book (no more than 200 words), and a short bio of the author;
- A cover image: minimum 200 dpi in pdf, jpg or tiff file;
- If other publications or authors have reviewed the book, send a brief sampling of those remarks.

If you would like us to return the book, include a note with it saying so. (We will pay for shipping.)

E-books: We’ll also mention books that are only electronically published: send title, author, a cover image, website for downloads, and a brief paragraph about the book.

Books submitted to *State of the Arts* appear in this publication at the Montana Arts Council’s discretion and as space permits, and will not necessarily be reprinted in *Lively Times*.

ABOUT BOOKS

Fire Birds, Valuing Natural Wildfires and Burned Forests

By Sneed B. Collard III
Published 2014 by Bucking Horse Books, Missoula, MT
\$17 hardcover

In his latest work, award-winning science author Sneed Collard seeks to shift the way the public views the charred landscape that is left after a wildfire sweeps through a forest.

“More than 15 kinds of birds prefer to nest in burned forests,” notes University of Montana biologist Dick Hutto, whom Collard consulted for this book. Wildfires can be very devastating when humans and their dwellings are affected, but fire can be extremely beneficial to the health of a forest by eliminating dangerous accumulations of fallen trees and other excess fuels. The seeds of some shrubs and trees become activated only after exposure to fire.

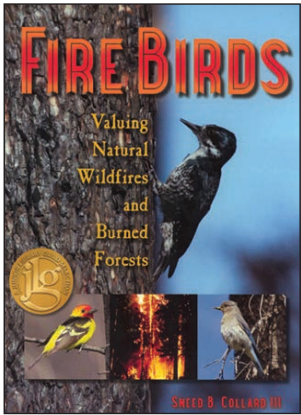
The author tells us that one of the first birds to appear in a newly burned forest is the Black-backed Woodpecker. What’s the attraction? Seems that “within hours of a forest fire, legions of wood-boring beetles descend on the burned forest,” and thus become a tasty food source for woodpeckers, as well as robins, mountain bluebirds, Clark’s nutcracker, and others.

He notes that advances in fire science and wildfire management are changing the public’s attitude towards the benefits to the ecosystem that fire can bring. “It is good for the soul to walk into a burned forest,” writes Collard. “Most people don’t realize how alive it truly is!”

The book is printed in large type, easy enough for young readers and interesting for all ages. Beautiful color photographs of birds and scenes, many taken by the author, illustrate the work throughout.

The Missoula resident has written 65 books for young readers and received numerous awards, including the *Washington Post*-Children’s Book Guild Non-fiction Award for his body of work. Visit www.sneedbcollardiii.com for more information.

– Judy Shafter



Shadowboxing

By Mark Gibbons
Published 2014 by FootHills Publishing, Kanona, NY
\$16 softcover

Ever wonder what goes on in the brain of a poet? *Shadowboxing*, by Mark Gibbons, is like pulling on a headset and hearing “the rhythmic beat of music/ pounding the ear ... the heart/thump lapping at the shore ...”

The latest collection by the Missoula poet veers between rage and reflection. It is, after all, a compendium of loss: “The older we get, the more we hold./ all those souls who’ve left us behind./ We carry their stories, their voices ...”

It’s a weight Gibbons shoulders well. Several poems chronicle the last days of Ed Lahey, “the old miner king of poetry,” others remember Richard Brautigan, dead since 1984, and the poet’s Irish grandfather and his uncle Paul, “waltzing in the dining room/ in a cloud of flour dust/ with the wiry haired girl of his dreams.” Others evoke the obscenity of war, the last gasps of his hometown of Alberton.

Still, he leaves lots of breathing room for the living, desire, dancing to Taj Mahal, the simple pleasure of drinking a beer, a Sunday in May, “a gargle/ of air, a flutter of blood, the body/ language we love and know as ‘here.’”

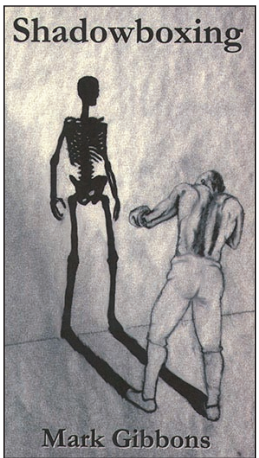
In “Just the Facts – About Poetry,” he reports, “nobody buys it/ nobody reads it/ but everybody agrees/ it’s really ‘important.’”

I know why I read it: for the slivers of sanity and solace that someone like Gibbons delivers. The reminder “that we best/ honor being alive by living ...”

“The term shadowboxing implies awareness of the present, preparation for what lies immediately ahead, and the practice that maintains a fighter’s rhythm,” writes Montana Poet Laureate Tami Haaland. “Gibbons’ rhythm, both earthy and elegant in this volume, is well suited to the task.”

Gibbons lives in Missoula where he teaches poetry and drives a delivery truck. He’s the author of eight collections of poetry and received an Artist’s Innovation Award from the Montana Arts Council in 2013.

– Kristi Niemeyer

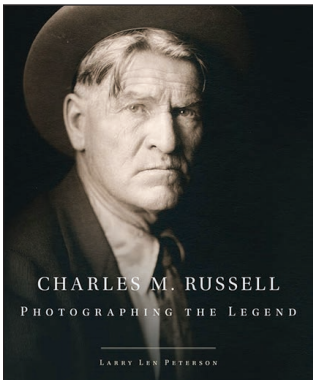


Charles M. Russell, Photographing the Legend

By Larry Len Peterson, foreword by Brian W. Dippie
Published 2014 by the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK
\$60 hardcover; \$350 leatherbound

Almost as familiar as the images of the American West he painted and sculpted is the figure of Charles M. Russell himself. Standing or mounted, in boots and wide-brimmed hat, sash knotted at his waist, gaze steady under a hank of unruly hair: he is the one and only “Cowboy Artist.”

What is not so well known is the story that unfolds in the myriad photographs of Russell, pictures that document a remarkable life while also reflecting the evolution of photography and the depiction of the American West at the turn of the 20th century. This biography by Montana native Larry Len Peterson makes use of hundreds of images of Russell, many never before published, to explore the role of photography in shaping the artist’s public image and the making and selling of his art. More than that, the book shows how the Cowboy Artist personified what he portrayed.



Peterson traces Russell’s image and his career from his first adventures, arriving in Helena from St. Louis as a teenager, to his apotheosis as an artist, and then to his California period and his final days as the grand statesman of the American West. Along the way we meet some of the most interesting photographers of the era, as Russell posed for Edward S. Curtis, Roland Reed, Clarence S. Bull, and Dorothea Lange, among others. Because Nancy Russell used photographs to promote her artist husband’s career and artistic identity, we also see the medium’s early application as a marketing tool in the hands of a surprisingly savvy businesswoman.

Alongside Peterson’s engrossing tale of the life of this American icon, the hundreds of photographs of Russell, his friends, family members, business associates, colleagues, and celebrities of his time offer a unique view of the artist’s historic and cultural milieu – a view at once panoramic and intimate.

Peterson, a native of Plentywood, is an acknowledged expert on art and art history of the American West. Brian W. Dippie, who wrote the foreword, is considered the leading authority on Russell.

“Captivating from cover to cover ... Highly recommended,” writes *Midwest Book Review*.

Tucker’s Seasonal Words of Wisdom

By Lynn Campion, illustrated by Theodore Waddell
Published 2014 by Bar R Books, Helena, MT
\$16.95 hardcover

Montana/Idaho painter and sculptor Theodore Waddell is best known for his “landscapes with animals,” vast canvases that bring together western subject matter (Black Angus cattle, sheep, horses, and the occasional bison) and the painterly approach of Abstract Expressionism.

On the side, Waddell makes drawings of things he loves, especially Bernese Mountain Dogs.

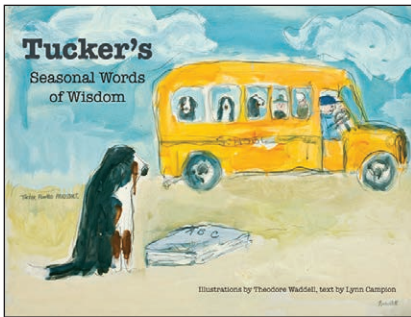
Now Waddell and his wife, Lynn Campion, introduce readers to another delightful children’s book in the “Tucker” series: *Tucker’s Seasonal Words of Wisdom*. The 80-page book features 32 full-color illustrations detailing the adventures of five large and loveable Bernese Mountain Dogs.

Waddell has lavishly illustrated this second volume of his “Tucker” series (the first, *Tucker Gets Tuckered*, came out in 2006), and Campion contributes the lively text.

The narrative follows the Bernese Mountain Dog and his fellow Berners as they lead the reader through a year of fun and exploration in the Northern Rockies, experiencing the joys associated with each season, all the while sharing their uplifting brand of canine wisdom.

As one reader wrote of Waddell’s earlier book, “The story is fun for kids, but also rings true for all adults who have ever had a dog. And the illustrations are world class.”

Waddell is an internationally known artist, and a long-time participant in the U.S. State Department’s Art in Embassies program; his paintings are currently featured in the Beijing residence of U.S. Ambassador to China Max Baucus. His work is shown in museums and galleries throughout the United States and can be found in private and public collections around the world. Campion is a photographer, author and accomplished horsewoman. The couple divides their time between homes in Sheridan, MT and Hailey, ID.



Painted Horses

By Malcolm Brooks
Published 2014 by Grove Atlantic, New York, NY
\$25 hardcover

Prepare to disappear into this galloping, utterly engrossing debut by Missoula author Malcolm Brooks.

It’s 1956, and fledgling archaeologist Catherine Lemay is hired to look for artifacts in an unexplored canyon on the edge of the Crow Reservation. She takes on a young Crow woman, Miriam, as her assistant, and with a reluctant, edgy guide, who hunted mustangs and Nazis, they begin to explore a canyon that’s “fifty miles long and deeper than Satan’s own appetites.” Their mission is to unearth historical sites and artifacts before a dam is erected at its mouth.

Reared in the East and schooled in London, exhuming Roman artifacts after the Blitz, she now finds herself in an unforgiving landscape, both vast and alien. The story twines together her earnest and often dangerous escapade, and the mysterious John H, a canyon dweller who possesses an uncanny kinship with horses and an artist’s knack for isolating “beauty from the terror of existence.”

So many streams come together here: archaeology, the ravages and aftermath of World War II, and the grandeur and austerity of eastern Montana. All of it is made personal and compelling by the enigmatic artist, the spirited archaeologist and the canyon itself, a gorge that “snaked and sidled like the forces of wind and water that carved it, twisting this way and that, its sandy floor littered with rocks calved loose and toppled from above.”

The story also works on a much larger canvas, making intimate the clash between progress and the natural world. “What is the point of owning a Gauguin if you can’t recognize beauty when it’s right in front of you?” Lemay asks the head of the power company. He, on the other hand, regards the canyon and its contents as “a whole lot of nothing.”

While the author’s writing has drawn comparisons to literary giants Wallace Stegner, Cormac McCarthy and Jim Harrison, the book “is its own work, a big, old-fashioned, and important novel,” writes Rick Bass. And *Library Journal* lauds it as “a bold, beautiful read.”

Brooks, who grew up in the rural foothills of the California Sierras, says he logs “just enough hours as a carpenter to finance an array of interests including writing, reading, hunting, horses, bird dogs, gardening, and cooking.” His writing has appeared in *Gray’s Sporting Journal*, *Big Sky Journal*, *Montana Quarterly*, and *Outside*, among others.

– Kristi Niemeyer

